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July 21, 1960

MEMORANDUM OF CONFERENCE WITH THE PRESIDENT
July 19, 1960, 3:15 PM Newport

Others present: Secretary Herter, Mr. Bohlen, Mr.
Kohler, Mr. Wilcox, Mr. Hagerty,
General Goodpaster

Secretary Herter first took up the matters before the United Nations. He said the United Nations Security Council had acted to refer the Cuban complaint to the Organization of American States. The determination of the place to hold the meeting of the OAS has developed into a problem. We are still hoping that it can be arranged for Costa Rica. The President said he thought that anywhere in Central or South America would be preferable to having it in the United States.



Mr. Herter next reported on the status of the Nicaro plant. It is evident that we will probably have to close this plant. However, we are making a final attempt to negotiate its sale to the Cubans. The President asked what recourse we have if the Cubans force us to close it. He commented that our case regarding this plant should be stronger than with regard to private enterprises since its operation is based upon an intergovernmental agreement. Mr. Herter said we will simply do the best we can. The President went on to ask what we would do in case the Cubans try to take the Guantanamo Base over. He was not talking of the water supply, since we can meet minimum needs with water brought in by tanker. Mr. Herter said that as regards the base itself, we have a valid treaty not limited in duration, and subject to change only upon agreement by both parties. The President said what he wants to see is what we do if they attack and how we plan to do it.

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MR 81-84 #13
By DSH 11/12/82

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morning of Wednesday, July 20.)

Mr. Herter said he had some information that an American aircraft, which he thought was of C-47 type, had earlier on July 19th, through navigation error, flown directly over the Kuriles. The Soviets had apparently tried to bring it down but were unable to locate it in the fog and clouds.

Mr. Herter next took up the letter sent to the President from Mr. Macmillan enclosing the British reply to the Soviets on the RB-47 case, together with a personal letter from Macmillan to Khrushchev. He commented that Macmillan has taken a very stout stand. The President read the letter (which I carried up to him) and said that he was glad to see it.

Mr. Herter then said that the question should be considered why the Soviets are taking the line that they have been taking. Their action gives real grounds for concern, since they are deliberately engaging in saber-rattling. He said that he and his associates, particularly Mr. Bohlen, have been giving some thought as to how best to handle this situation. One action that they have thought of is to work for something of major psychological effect through bring^{ing} our defense forces to a greater state of readiness. He asked Mr. Bohlen to outline this line of thought. Mr. Bohlen said the Soviet actions were now going beyond their usual ugly, angry reaction to every event they dislike. There has been a considerable shift in the Soviet behavior, evidenced by widespread campaign of inciting violence and disorder all around the world. He said that the threat to use force is something new in the Soviet tactics. This has now become something more than just words and needs to be met with more than words, since polemics and arguments are something they love for creating tension and disturbing world affairs. He said he had been casting about for some action that might quiet them down and show the world that the Soviets are not in position to rule the roost.



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- 5 -

At this point the President asked in what specific military fields this could be done which would have real significance. He commented that everyone knows that if we added to our ICBM program it would be three years before the additional items were actually off the line. Mr. Bohlen said another possibility is to put SAC on airborne alert. The President said the Air Force itself is opposed to this, adding that SAC did not want it. I commented that the Air Force staff, including General White and General LeMay, have not wanted to do this but that General Power has been pressing for it. The President said he gave no weight to Power's views. Mr. Bohlen said that even if the use of the funds is not spelled out, just requesting them would show that we are not being frightened or cowed. He thought we might consider adding to our airlift. The President said he thought that additional airlift is perhaps the least significant need. What he thought he could do was ask authorization from the Congress to start spending available funds more rapidly because of the RB-47 incident, the Congo, Cuba, etc. Perhaps he could put more Atlases in production, and put more of the Air Force on air alert. Mr. Herter asked whether he might talk to Defense about this. The President went on to say that he did not like too much the idea of adding Atlases because it is practically an obsolete weapon. He would be more interested in the Minuteman, but again it is several years until the first of these will appear. Mr. Bohlen suggested he might simply ask the Congress for added money for defense and economic aid. The President said the crux of the matter is to decide what would carry sufficient credibility to create the psychological effect desired. Mr. Bohlen said he thought the Soviets are well aware the military balance is definitely against them. It is just possible, however, that they think our hands are tied during the pre-election period.



The President said he might ask for up to 100 additional ICBMs or perhaps \$500 million for speed-up of weapons systems already proven and for increasing the degree of alertness. In response to the Secretary's question, he asked that the Secretary meet with the Secretary of Defense, Gordon Gray, Mr. Harr and myself. He commented that he could state his intention even prior to the reconvening of the Congress, and bring out that, because of Soviet truculence and arrogance, he proposes to put a certain increase

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- 6 -

of funds into defense. These funds would be used to get things we want more quickly or additional things that are useful, and would not go into waste. Mr. Bohlen thought this could be done in a sober and deliberate way without kicking off a war scare. There was question as to whether anything could be done in the field of IRBMs. Mr. Kohler said that the MRBM has some possibility, although we are far from having worked out political arrangements. The President said that the meeting he spoke of should be held soon and asked that the Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense not go down in their organization below an echelon they could trust since we do not want this getting to the press in a distorted way.



In further discussion Mr. Bohlen said there are two hypotheses with regard to this change of Soviet line. The first, which he does not believe, is that they might have decided this is the best year for a show-down -- that the correlation of forces is in their favor, and that the U. S. is paralyzed because of the forthcoming election. The second, which he is inclined to favor, is that they are having a good deal of trouble with Peiping and are adopting a militant line in order to cut out the Chinese. There was a suggestion that the President make a public statement on this matter, whether by live address or by "tape" within the next few days. I suggested that this should preferably come after the convention, rather than before as some seem to be contemplating, on the ground that the President should not be doing two dissimilar things before the American people at the same time. If he were to speak now he would have to change his approach at the Convention and then revert to this, and this would be confusing. After discussion the President thought that there could be a mention by Mr. Herter of concern over this problem before he left Newport later the same afternoon, that the President might mention it briefly but clearly at the Convention, and then make his speech on it later. The President asked whether it might be a good move to take the U. S. dependents out of Berlin. Mr. Kohler thought that this action would frighten the Berliners and that panic might result which would damage and erode our position. He said that Mr. Merchant has been conducting a study of counter-measures, possible alert steps, and contingency planning. The

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President confirmed that Mr. Herter should say we are taking a serious look at the Soviet line of action.

The President then commented, with respect to the issue that has arisen over whether the Bundestag should meet in Berlin, that there was no special reason from our standpoint for the Bundestag to meet there but that, when the Soviets begin to make these threats, we are obliged to come to the support of our German friends.

Mr. Kohler then raised one point with regard to flights such as the RB-47. The British have apparently stopped theirs for the present and have suggested that we suspend our flights. We have held up certain of them but if we were to stop them for very long, it would be difficult and dangerous to start them up again. The President recalled his question (which Colonel Eisenhower had conveyed to General Twining) as to why the British could not take on the sector of northwest Europe for such operations. He agreed that if we suspend the flights for very long it would be very hard to start them up. The President thought that on the next such flight we ought to give consideration to announcing the route in advance.



Mr. Herter next referred to a letter addressed to the President by Mr. McCone having to do with certain nuclear experimentation. After discussion the President gave this his approval subject to remarks that he entered on the letter.

Mr. Herter then spoke of the answer he proposed to give to the recent letter from Congressman Bowles concerning the Formosa Straits situation. The explanation is lengthy, and there is one point about which he had a question. This suggests that Mr. Bowles come in to the State Department for an oral supplement and discussion of the policy. I reported to the President the advice from staff members and other senior officials that oral discussion with the Democratic candidates or their associates on matters of foreign policy should be avoided. The President agreed with this, but after discussion said that Mr. Herter might offer to talk to Mr. Bowles in his capacity as a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. Mr. Herter next said that, from a report given to him by Secretary Anderson after the latter's Meeting with the President on Sunday, he had the impression that the President had agreed not to ask for any

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